

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 IO-13
DODE-00 /098 W
-----104670 210833Z /13

R 210710Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9418
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1405

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, KN
SUBJECT: NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY

REF: A) SEOUL 1203; B) CAIRO 5068

1. NORTH KOREA'S ISSUANCE ON FEB 1 OF A DIPLOMATIC MEMORANDUM
REJECTING THE DIVISION OF KOREA, INCLUDING CROSS-RECOGNITION,
JOINT UN MEMBERSHIP, ETC. (REF A), HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY
OTHER NORTH KOREAN ACTIVITY IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD.
IN CONTRAST TO THE GENERAL SLIGHTING OF FOREIGN RELATIONS
ISSUES DURING THE SUPREME PEOPLES ASSEMBLY PERIOD IN
DECEMBER, AND IN KIM IL SONG'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE, THE
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NORTH KOREAN MEDIA SINCE MID-JANUARY HAVE BEEN
FILLED WITH MATERIAL ON REUNIFICATION; MOREOVER,
FOREIGN TRAVEL BY NORTH KOREAN REPRESENTATIVES HAS
INCREASED NOTICEABLY SINCE THE FIRST OF THE YEAR.

2. IN THE EAST ASIAN AREA, THE LEVEL OF NORTH KOREAN
ACTIVITY HAS SHOWN A MARKED INCREASE SINCE EARLY

JANUARY. THE ROK EMBASSY IN RANGOON CONFIRMS THAT A CONTINUING SERIES OF NK VISITS TO BURMA, INCLUDING ONE RECENTLY BY THE DPRK'S CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, FORMS PART OF THE BUILDUP TO AN EXPECTED STATE VISIT BY KIM IL SONG LATER THIS YEAR. A NORTH KOREAN TRADE DELEGATION IS CURRENTLY VISITING THAILAND, AND THE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN RECENTLY RECEIVED A DELEGATION OF NK BROADCASTING EXPERTS. INDIA AND NORTH KOREA SIGNED A TRADE AGREEMENT ON FEBRUARY 3, IN NEW DELHI.

3. THE MIDEAST IS ALSO RECEIVING CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION. THE DPRK RECENTLY MET EGYPTIAN ROVING AMBASSADOR TUHAMI IN PYONGYANG, AT WHICH TIME AN EXCHANGE OF STATE VISITS BETWEEN SADAT AND KIM IL SONG WAS AGREED UPON (REFTEL B). TUHAMI'S HOST, VICE PRESIDENT PAK SONG CHOL, LEFT PYONGYANG FEBRUARY 11 TO VISIT SEVERAL MIDEASTERN AND AFRICAN NATIONS, INCLUDING SOUTH YEMEN AND ZAMBIA.

4. WE WOULD EXPECT ANY NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE TO BE MOUNTED PRINCIPALLY IN EAST ASIA, THE MIDEAST, AND AFRICA, SINCE THESE ARE THE AREAS WHERE NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA CONTINUE TO FIND SCOPE FOR THEIR ONGOING DIPLOMATIC COMPETITION. IT IS IN THESE AREAS THAT THE ROK'S PATIENT ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY HAS BEEN MAKING SIGNIFICANT INROADS IN RECENT YEARS. CONFIDENTIAL

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YET IT IS IN THESE SAME AREAS THAT THE GREATEST NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ARE STILL WITHOUT DIPLOMATIC OR OTHER TIES TO THE ROK, INCLUDING ALMOST ALL THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH ROK MOFA RECENTLY DESIGNATED AS ITS TARGETS FOR ESTABLISHING OR UPGRADING RELATIONS DURING 1978. IT WAS AMONG THESE NON-ALIGNED STATES THAT THE NORTH KOREANS SCORED THE GREATEST SUCCESSES WITH THEIR AGGRESSIVE DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGNS OF THE 1960'S AND EARLY 1970'S.

5. VICE PRESIDENT PAK SONG CHOL IS GENERALLY CREDITED WITH HAVING PLAYED THE KEY ROLE IN THOSE CAMPAIGNS AND PROBABLY RETAINS SOME PERSONAL CACHET AMONG A NUMBER OF NATIONAL LEADERS. RELIEVED OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS PREMIER IN DECEMBER 1977, AND ADVANCED TO THE USUALLY CEREMONIAL VICE-PRESIDENCY, PAK WAS SHOWN BY EVENTS IN JANUARY TO HAVE RETAINED HIS ACTIVE ROLE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. IF A DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE IS IN FACT UNDERWAY, PAK, THE LOGICAL MAN TO DIRECT IT, WOULD BE IN A POSITION NOW TO DEVOTE HIS COMPLETE ENERGIES TO DOING SO.

6. GOALS: THE RECENT VISIT TO BELGRADE BY A SENIOR PARTY OFFICIAL BEARING A LETTER IN WHICH KIM IL SONG APPEALED TO TITO TO SUPPORT THE BASIC POINTS OF THE FEB 1 MEMORANDUM, SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE NORTH'S EFFORT MAY BE AIMED, PRIMARILY OR IN PART, AT SCORING A DIPLOMATIC VICTORY WITHIN THE NONALIGNED MOVEMENT. THE DPRK MAY HOPE, AT THIS SUMMER'S KABUL AND BELGRADE NONALIGNED MEETINGS, TO GENERATE, IF NOT PARTICIPANTS' COMMITMENTS TO BREAK OR ESCHEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ROK, THEN RHETORICAL SUPPORT THAT WOULD CARRY OVER TO THE U. N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS WELL AS TO THE 1979 HAVANA NONALIGNED CONFERENCE. SPECIFIC NORTH KOREAN DESIRE WOULD PROBABLY BE FOR A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THEIR POSITION ON REUNIFICATION, RELATIONS
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WITH THE ROK, ETC. THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A RESOLUTION COULD RAISE AT LEAST SOME MEMBER NATIONS' RELUCTANCE TO PROCEED WITH ANY ESTABLISHMENT OR EXPANSION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ROK.

7. EVEN IF THE NORTH KOREANS DID NOT SUCCEED IN PASSING SUCH A RESOLUTION IN EITHER FORUM, THEY MAY FEEL THAT IN CAMPAIGNING FOR IT THEY COULD ATTRACT ENOUGH ATTENTION TO ACCOMPLISH MORE OR LESS THE DESIRED RESULT. IN ADDITION, PYONGYANG PROBABLY REGARDS ANY EXTERNAL SUPPORT AS VALUABLE DOMESTICALLY (AS DOES THE ROKG). SUCH A CAMPAIGN WOULD ENABLE THE DPRK TO CONDUCT AN IDEOLOGICAL RATHER THAN AN ECONOMIC COMPETITION, AND ONE IN WHICH, WITHOUT HAVING TO DEMAND ANY REAL SACRIFICES OR THEIR IDEOLOGICALLY-SYMPATHETIC COLLEAGUES, THEY COULD HOPE TO IMPEDE, TO SOME DEGREE AT LEAST, THE ROK'S STEADY PROGRESS IN FORGING ITS DIPLOMATIC LINKS WITHIN THE THIRD WORLD. IN ANY EVENT, THE NORTH IS NO MORE ABLE THAN THE ROK TO LET IS RIVAL RETAIN THE DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE THROUGH DEFAULT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SEOUL01405
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780077-0849
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780232/aaaabazb.tel
Line Count: 157
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c3d3b7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 SEOUL 1203, 78 CAIRO 5068
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3534745
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY
TAGS: PEPR, PDIP, KN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c3d3b7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014